

# **Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island**

## **Youth Council Minutes**

**September 17, 2009**

**Present: Vanessa Cooley, Alexis Devine, Joseph DiPina, Lissa Dreyer, Alberto DeBurgo, Cynthia Farrell, Victoria Gailliard- Garrick, Sharon Gainey, Lee Lewis, Phil Stone, Andrew Tyska, and Johan Uvin.**

**Absent: Everett Amaral, Joseph DeSantis, Andrew DeTora, Dorothy Mattiello, Michael Montanaro, and Scott Seaback.**

**Staff and guests: Christine Grieco, Diane Vendetti, Carlos Ribeiro, Sharon Geoffrey, Joanne Thibedeau, Mavis McGetrick, Lisa Fuentes, Brian Gambardella and Lisa Rose.**

**With a quorum present, Cynthia Farrell called the meeting to order at 8:43 AM. All present were asked to review the minutes from the previous meeting held on May 4th, 2009.**

**VOTE: Lissa Dreyer made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Vanessa Cooley seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**There were introductions of all those present.**

### **Youth Center Presentation**

**Carlos Ribeiro said that managers of the Youth Centers in RI have**

been invited to speak to the Youth Council to better facilitate an understanding of what is accomplished in the Youth Centers. WPGRI oversees 12 Youth Centers in the state. The Pawtucket Youth Centers presented this month. There is a center in the netWORKri office and a center in the Woodlawn Community Center.

Lisa Fuentes, Pawtucket Youth Center Manager reported that currently 1400 youth are being served. The youth being served range in ages 14 to 24. The Youth centers are offering everything from GED services to tutoring and collaboration with the Pawtucket Library to provide online homework help for the youth. They have had an orientation with 137 youth in attendance.

Work readiness training is being expanded by including 14 and 15 year olds and is covering issues like telephone etiquette, how to apply for a job, and follow through. They are hoping to start a pilot workshop with approximately 23 youth in October. They would like to expand the Youth Center hours in the Pawtucket netWORKri office to accommodate this project and have approached the center manager about this.

Lissa Dreyer reported that the biggest challenge has been the lack of enough GED services in Pawtucket. The Pawtucket youth do not want to go down into Providence for these services. There are waiting lists for GED services at the Pawtucket Youth Centers because the youth are not being encouraged to stay in school and graduate. Calls are

being received directly from the schools referring youth to the centers. However, the program this summer was an excellent experience. She recruited most of the Youth through Central Falls. The eligibility requirements were difficult to get through because 300 youth had applied. It was good to see that many youth applying for jobs. Low income and a barrier were required to be WIA eligible to participate in that part of the program. JDF eligibility does not include income requirements and barriers.

Tollman High School is referring youth to the Youth centers, often directly from the guidance office. There are services for these youth in the high schools but most of the many referrals come from Tollman. The influx has caused a need to track where youth are coming from and why they are coming to the Youth centers.

Johan Uvin spoke about the GED program in Newport called Diploma +. He would like to see a program like that in the Pawtucket Youth Center.

Phil Stone addressed Lisa Fuentes about the work being done to prepare youth properly for job interviews. It makes a difference for small and mid-sized business owners in the state to receive well-prepared applicants. Carlos responded that there are two components being addressed in the Youth centers; one is leadership development and the other is work preparation.

## **Youth Program Enrollment and Services, WIA, JDF**

**Carlos reported that the focus has been on the Summer Youth and Stimulus programs for youth. WIA targets the hard-to-serve youth population.**

**The new WIA programs will start on November 1st, 2009. There have been challenges with the new software and it has taken 45 minutes to enter each of the 1000 youth in to the system. In October there will be a transition to the year-end program.**

**JDF has been exceeding the numbers. It was at 132% in 2007, at 126% in 2008 and by April, 2009 at 69% with the expectation to exceed the mark again. Initially, \$600,000 had been given and then \$3 million was invested to serve 10,000 youth.**

## **Youth Program Enrollment & Services ARRA**

**The ARRA summer stimulus invested \$5 million between WPGRI and WSPC. Vendors had three weeks to respond to the RFP. Eighteen proposals were accepted and everything started in July. 907 youth were served and some of the vendors exceeded their contract numbers of youth served, so the numbers subsequently exceeded overall. WPGRI provided about 1,600 summer jobs, close to 1,000 with Stimulus funds.**

**The Warwick Voc Tech program has received good press and media coverage. It provides training in auto, printing, office, carpentry and**

graphic design. There is also a start of interest in designing software for games. There is an idea for these schools to stay open after hours so that WIA youth can attend and benefit from these types of training classes.

Congressman Sheldon Whitehouse and Senator Jack Reed visited a youth site to see what has been accomplished with the Youth Programs and to support those efforts.

This summer there had been only two weeks to recruit youth for programs. If the VocTech schools open in the summer they will be able to provide skill training and also increase their own enrollment due to the positive exposure.

\$1.7 million in ARRA Youth Stimulus money has been received and \$1.2 million was put on the streets immediately. Seventy-four adults were hired to work, making the program payroll \$200,000 per week. Some programs are still running until the end of the summer. At Tollgate the youth are building a concession stand and a press box. There is also culinary training.

Victoria Gailliard-Garrick said that at Davies VocTech in Lincoln they offer some professional courses for a large adult learner population. Transportation is a problem for youth in Lincoln. They hope to start a summer enrichment program for youth in need of more academic help. She has a large building to work with and would be willing to

help with a GED program.

## **Fiscal Reporting**

Brian Gambardella reported that in looking back to PY2007 he has found some vendors who were not aware of the requirement to do a close-out package. They have 45 days to complete this and he is willing to walk them through the process this time.

Brian has been doing fiscal monitoring at vendor sites and if there is any money remaining there will be the possibility of having more programs. He has gone to both new and previous funded vendors, met with those running the programs, explained what documentation is needed, and also how to prepare the invoices. Some agencies had to be reminded to fulfill these responsibilities in a timely manner.

He has been going out with Carlos and meeting with each new vendor and going over contracts page by page. The details are being covered and technical assistance is being provided where it is needed.

Five vendors have not been closed out yet. They will be closed out by the end of October.

The turn-around time for ARRA payments has taken months at times. WPGRI has asked those in positions of influence to pressure for payment priority. This has worked fairly well. There is pressure to spend the ARRA money and track it very carefully. Usually vendors

that don't have cash availability or ability to get bridge loan from banks struggle to cover payroll. Our difficulty has been with the Controllers office at the DOA. The level of federal monitoring is deep with 3 to 4 layers, including the fiscal portion. There have been at least 4 monitoring visits to each of the 18 vendor sites.

## **RFP 2010**

Cynthia Farrell said that we are targeting mid October for sending out the 2010 RFPs. We also want to be ready in case a Recovery Act II happens. The guidelines will be used from the 2009 ARRA RFP.

The Junior Achievement career model is being used statewide. Job preparation and application assistance is being provided.

Stand alone WIA sites have received 5,000-\$6,000 per youth. At one time, RI had provided \$10,000 per youth. This year the GWB reduced the JDF funding from \$3 million to \$2 million. A meeting will be set up with John O'Hare to arrange to receive an equitable distribution of funds. WPGRI has 5 Youth Centers versus 1 in Providence.

The Future Funding Workshop will be provided by Shared Youth Vision. The RI Department of Education will be putting out an adult RFP.

**Johan Uvin said that at the federal level there is a partnership between 14 federal agencies. There is excitement about new initiatives that have come from this. Rhode Island has advanced through the program and has been able to obtain funds to test the program they have for serving at-risk youth by using caseworkers together on a conferencing team. This has been proven effective elsewhere and Rhode Island would like to replicate the program. To do this statewide, Youth Centers will be used in the process of working with the targeted youth and a weekly case conference will be held with one person acting as the liaison. This program will be carried out and any necessary adjustments will be made. This will be done in the hope of transforming how we work with at-risk youth.**

**The World of Work program was successful is expanding to more high schools in the state.**

**There has been a \$500,000 challenge fund set up by the GWB to help grow youth services. An RFP will be provided for approval by the Youth Council when it is completed.**

**With no more business to discuss, Alexis Devine motioned to adjourn the meeting. Lissa Dreyer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 AM.**

**The next meeting of the Youth Council will be held on October 15, 2009.**



**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Lisa Rose**  
**Administrative Assistant**